GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1420
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2007
SHORTAGE OF LIFE SAVING DRUGS
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any shortage of life saving drugs in the Government Health Centres ;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ;

(c) if not, the percentage of life saving drugs available in the Government Health Centres ;

(d) whether the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Patel Chest Institute, New Delhi have conducted any survey regarding availability of life saving drugs in five State of the country ;

(e) if so, the details thereof ;

(f) whether it has been detected in this survey that people are forced to purchase the life saving drugs by paying 80 percent higher rates; and

(g) if so, the steps being taken by the Government in this regard ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a)to(c) : The Ministry has conducted a Facility Survey (2003) in the country under Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme.The survey has collected information regarding the health care facilities available in different health care establishments, ranging from Sub Centres, Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Community Health Centres (CHCs), First Referral Units (FRUs) to District Hospitals, According to this survey, about 45.4% of District Hospitals, 40.6% of FRUs, 37.3% of CHCs have kit with Emergency Obstetric Care drugs (EmOC) and 32.2% of PHCs have Essential Obstetric Care (EsOC) drug kit. Moreover, drug kits A and B are available at 97% and 95.2% of the Sub Centres, respectively. The State-wise details are given in Annexures I to V.

(d) to (e): The World Health Organization, Vaiiabhbhai Patel Chest Institute and Health Action International) had undertaken six surveys simultaneously during October 2004 to January 2005 in five States to assess medicine prices and availability for commonly used essential medicines in public and private facilities. The surveys were done in States of Haryana, Karnataka and West Bengal, at two sites in Maharashtra as well as in Chennai city.The study was related to `essential` medicine and not to `life saving drugs`. From the results of this study, it is observed that the percent availability of specific medicines in public sector facilities (tertiary, secondary and primary health facilities) varies from medicine to medicine as well as across the States. The percent availability of specific generic medicines in public sector in six survey areas in India is given in Annexure VI.

(f): This study does not show that life saving drugs are being sold at prices 80% higher than the maximum retail price.When medicine are not available at public facilities, citizens may be forced to purchase medicines from private retail pharmacies.

(g): Health being a State-subject, the health facilities are Under the control of State Governments. However, the Government of India is providing drugs and kits under Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) - II programme requirements of States reflected in their Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs). Support is provided for purchase of drugs as per the requirements reflected by the State Governments in their PIPs under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)